

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, TECHNOLOGY AND STANDARDS
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Markup of H.R. 1674, the U.S. Tsunami Warning and Education Act
Wednesday April 20, 2005, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for coming to today's brief subcommittee markup of H.R. 1674, the U.S. Tsunami Warning and Education Act. On December 26, 2004, one of the most devastating tsunamis ever recorded struck the nations of the Indian Ocean Basin. As people recovered from the shock of the event, we naturally began to ask questions such as "What can we learn from this to prevent future disasters?" In that vein, I joined Chairman Boehlert, Mr. Wu, and Mr. Inslee to introduce H.R.1674.

The U.S. Tsunami Warning and Education Act authorizes \$30 million annually for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to:

- expand tsunami forecast and warning capability for all U.S. coastlines;
- increase emphasis on community-based tsunami education and outreach activities so that the public knows the proper response to tsunami warnings;
- maintain a tsunami research program; and
- provide technical advice and training to the international community.

The bill is based on the Administration's proposal for a national tsunami warning system and incorporates comments from many experts, including witnesses at the Science Committee hearing held in January.

Unfortunately, it has taken a tragic event to bring natural disaster response planning to our attention today. However, now that the opportunity is upon us we must act quickly to establish a tsunami forecast and warning system for the United States, and to educate the public to understand and heed the warnings. Chairman Boehlert developed an excellent bill and we do not anticipate any amendments at today's markup. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and pass it along to the full committee.